

## Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing Testimony 2/23/2017

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am the Reverend Kathleen Peters and I am writing on behalf of my daughter Sarah Peters who lives in Chester, CT in Senator Art Linares' and Representative Robert Siegrist's district. Yes she is intellectually disabled and yes she is a registered voter and yes she matters!! I have testified on my daughter's behalf many times and today I write to you from my new home in Florida. I am testifying, once again, on the impact of the Governor's and the state's budget on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The needs of my daughter and her friends are once again being pitted against one another as you seek to balance the state budget on the backs of our most insecure citizens. Each year we must come and beg for funding for those who cannot always fend for themselves. You are once again pitting families against each other as they are forced to fight for their piece of inadequate funds: vital funds that provide supported employment and housing; crucial funds for behavioral care services as well as essential funds for family support grants that provide critical supports for families strained by the daily care of their disabled loved ones.

What a blessing that after many years of testimony and education the Governor has listened and proposes to invest \$3.8 million in the ID Partnership which will help people on the DDS residential waiting list, support developing more residential options for people with I/DD and stabilize community based supports.

What an injustice that there will be:

No funding for day and employment services for all new graduates!

No funding for Family Support Grants!

No funding for new families who need Behavioral Support Services!

While funding to address the waitlist is a wonderful start, it is still inadequate, and the lack of funding for these other community services will be devastating to already stressed families.

The time has come to be courageous and make the necessary cuts and readjustments to the already well documented DDS overtime problems as well as addressing the system wide waste and unfair distribution of funds in the DDS budget. Fix these problems! Please listen to The Arc CT and other family advocacy groups that have shown you how you might actively change the DDS structure and department rather than always acting in crisis mode. Our families can't wait!!

Please let this be the year that our CT legislature does what is morally right! After years of fighting and begging and groveling to DDS, our daughter now has what she needs to live a dignified and full life. Many of her friends are not so blessed. This is no way to run a system! My daughter and her friends, all of our daughters and sons with intellectual and developmental disabilities...your constituents...are depending on you to make it right!

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Kathleen Peters

On behalf of Sarah Peters

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